



OPEN DOORS

Crossing a Threshold

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

The tragedy Las Vegas has suffered this past week has made our current series called **Open Doors** even more meaningful. The curriculum is based upon a book entitled [All the Places to Go](#) by John Ortberg, who helps us to think about our lives and recognize that we are not products of our circumstances, but of the doors that are opened and closed to us. So many new doors have opened to us as we recognize the terrible death toll and the ravaged families who lost their loved ones; the injured who may need care for months ahead; the responders and medical staff who witnessed horrific results of evil as they worked to save lives; and the damaged people of our city who never thought it could happen here. So many divine opportunities for service have been laid before us and we are up to the challenge because Jesus is the door we step through.

SCRIPTURE¹

Psalm 34:18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 23:4a Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 8:31-32 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

John 10:9-10 (NASB) I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

OBSERVATION

Tragedy has been part of God's created world from the beginning. The Bible has its share. Think of Cain and Abel, Job's family, a multitude of wars, death, famines, sins and disabilities. More current tragedies like 9/11, Sandy Hook, the Orlando night club and hurricanes like Katrina, Harvey, Maria, and Irma have caused untold misery for multitudes of people. But today we have our own horror to contend with. Las Vegas witnessed fifty-eight innocent people slaughtered and hundreds injured. What do we do with the shock, tears, pain, fear, outrage, confusion, PTSD and questions this event has caused us? Jesus alone has the answers.

Question: What tragedy have you endured in your life? What were the major factors that helped you survive that tragedy and go forward?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated



APPLICATION

Psalms tells us that Jesus is close to us and He saves those who have been crushed this week. He is accompanying us through this grief journey and asks that we **BREATHE** and cast our anxiety on Him. Breathe in His grace and breathe out our praise so we can hear His voice. Then we need to **MOURN** because our emotions are so strong, we can't begin healing until we go through the mourning process. Jesus promises to comfort us in our grief. Throughout all of this, we need to fall on our knees and seek the face of God in **PRAYER**. We can't view it as a last resort when Jesus is standing before us waiting to hear our voices. He is standing at the door, knocking and waiting to bring us the peace we so desperately need.

Question: What do you say to someone who has lost a family member or close friend this week?

Question: Have you cried this week because of the tragedy? What, in particular, did you hear that caused those tears?

Question: What are your feelings about the murderer? How can you deal with them? How are they hurting you?

We don't get to be in charge of what doors Jesus is opening – only our responses. Every tragedy opens doors of opportunity for us, so what is the next step?

1) Step through the first open door toward each other. We need each other for comfort, wisdom, counsel, cherishing, and understanding. We need our small groups to hold us together and lift us up as we carry each other's burdens. This is where we obey Jesus and love one another as He has loved us.

Question: Who came along side of you and helped you through so many emotions?

Question: Do you believe that you love people more now because of the tragedy than you previously thought?

2) Step through the second open door toward community. Our own Las Vegas experienced pure evil together and we need to overcome it with good. We have seen an outpouring of generosity, not only financially, but in blood donations, food, water, hospital visits, gathering in prayer, honoring first responders and medical staff. Asking "Why?" is a futile effort – we need to say "Here I am, Lord!"

Question: Who comprises your community? How did they come around you to help? Did you reach out to them this week?

Question: What did you specifically pray about this week? What do your prayers say about you?

3) Take a step toward God. Do you think Jesus is unaware of tragedy and grief? God didn't spare His own Son grief, hardship, loss, torture and death so He knows what we are feeling. He has not left us alone with no hope. He is our hope, He is our door, He is our All-in-All. He meets us each at our place of need.

Question: What feelings are you experiencing this week as a result of the Las Vegas tragedy?

Question: What are you personally doing to help Las Vegas heal? What doors is God opening for you as a result of our disaster.

4) Follow Jesus in baptism. Baptism represents Jesus' death, burial and resurrection and is an outward sign of our inward redemption.

Jesus is as close as our willingness to humble ourselves, repent of our sins, acknowledge Him as Lord, and invite Him in.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are in such pain and grieving over the injury and loss of people we may not even know, but they and their families are part of our community and we are suffering with them. We ache for the encircling of Your arms, Your soft breath on our faces, and the sound of Your Holy Spirit whispering to us that we are Your children and You are our everything. Help us to be generous in spirit and love as we step through Your open doors in service to our community and all people we encounter on our journey with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.